2

AYNI'S CHILDREN, OR MAKING A TAJIK-SOVIET INTELLIGENTSIA

This chapter focuses on the people who negotiated and implemented ideas for social transformation in their republic—the technical and cultural elite. Two generations are of particular interest: the first includes those individuals born around the time of the revolution—contemporaries of the Russian group Vlad Zubok called "Zhivago's Children." Like their Russian counterparts, they too sought to connect a prerevolutionary cultural inheritance and idealistic sensibility to the realities of the Soviet system.[1] The second is the generation that followed, meaning those who entered university starting in the late 1950s, and whom Donald Raleigh has called the "Soviet Baby Boomers."[2] This generation, writes Raleigh, experienced "the rise of youth culture, the appeal of Western popular culture, more leisure time, a carefree attitude, economic growth, rising living standards and a consumerist culture, and the expansion of education." Like their American counterparts, the Soviet baby boomers "played a vital, even defining role, in transforming the climate of the contemporary world."[3]

Just as there are important differences between the American and Russian baby boomers—the much greater wartime losses in the USSR, postwar poverty versus American postwar prosperity, and the legacy of late Stalinism—any study of the postwar Central Asian professional elite needs to make sense of how being on the semi-colonial periphery of the USSR shaped the experiences and worldview of its members. As a group they share much in common with other postcolonial elites, including a sometimes ambivalent relationship toward the metropole and its standards of progress and culture and a sense of their own mission with regard to the broader society.[4] At the same time, this was a Soviet

elite, and understanding this group requires looking at their experiences against the background of the Great Patriotic War, late Stalinism, the "thaw," and other milestones of Soviet history. We need to follow them outside the republic, around the USSR, and beyond. Many of these individuals were able to develop and take advantage of networks across all parts of the union. These networks helped them in their professional careers and affected how they saw the world and their place within it. Understanding the intelligentsia's experiences in the postwar decades will help us make sense of how they dealt with the dilemmas of modernization and "cultural construction" as they took on positions of responsibility in academia, publishing, and planning.

The sociologist Georgi Derluguian called the Soviet professional intelligentsia the "new proletarians" because they were brought from the peasantry into state industries and institutions. But he underlines that they were hardly the "hapless human material of Stalinist industrialization" or of postwar education and mobilization campaigns. Rather, Derluguian argues, the new proletarians took post-Stalinist Soviet ideology seriously, became socialized into urban Soviet life through education, and found ways to make claims on the state.[5] This conception of the "new proletariat" also holds for our case, although as we will see the boundary between the "proletarian intelligentsia" and the "bureaucracy" was porous.[6] The individuals that came of age in these decades ran the republic's newspapers, taught at its schools and universities, and debated and designed economic programs. Working in institutions like the State University, or the Council of Ministers of the Tajik SSR further encouraged them to think of "their" society as Tajik. In their progression through Soviet institutions and engagement with various forms of mobilization and cultural life, these individuals developed a sense of tangible responsibility for the future of their own society.

Making a National Intelligentsia under Stalin

The Bolsheviks had a complicated attitude towards the intelligentsia. Prior to the October revolution the term "intelligentsia" was used by the part of Russia's educated elite that saw itself as the conscience of the nation, defending the masses but not of them. The Bolsheviks needed the educated elite but reserved the role of leading the masses for themselves. As the historian Stuart Finkel points out, "The Soviet definition of intelligentsia was at once broader and more elemental [than the pre-revolutionary one] including all those who performed mental labor [*umstvennyi trud*] but rejecting the idea that the intelligentsia had any historic mission."[7] After the revolution the independent intelligentsia in Russia—the part of it that refused to side with the new regime—was largely

eliminated, either through repression or forced exile.[8] To fill the gap, the regime sought to organize writers, artists, and other intellectuals within more tightly bounded ideological frames, while at the same time establishing control over the "technical intelligentsia"—engineers and other experts that were heavily represented among the bourgeoisie. In subsequent years, its dependence on people educated under tsarism declined. The consolidation of control over higher education helped ensure that a new generation of specialists would emerge and free the regime from its reliance on remnants of the old elite.

In Central Asia, part of the intellectual elite that had sought social reforms and revolutionary change prior to the revolution sided with the Bolsheviks and sought to promote these changes within the new Soviet context. As Adeeb Khalid shows in *Making Uzbekistan,* most of the pre-Soviet reformers were at best ambivalent about the Bolsheviks, and some were highly suspicious of the new regime. Many nevertheless chose to reconcile with the new regime because of the broader opportunities it provided for cultural and social development. Flora Roberts, in her study of the old elite of Khojent (Leninobod), showed how the older elite used their social and cultural capital to shape Soviet institutions of enlightenment.[9] At the same time, a new elite was being shaped by Soviet schools, the Komsomol, and other institutions. As in the rest of the Soviet Union, the older elite was targeted in two waves—first in the early 1930s, and then again during the great terror. The elimination of those individuals thus fractured an important link between Soviet Central Asia and its prerevolutionary reform path. Still, the legacy of those reformers lived on and continued to shape how Central Asians thought about their own societies and their role in them.

These links become clear when we consider the biographies of some of Tajikistan's elite families. For example, the engineer and Communist Party official Jura L.'s parents came from Bukhara, where his grandfather had been a poet and jadid sympathizer; one of his poems was even included in Sadriddin Ayni's famous anthology of Tajik poetry, *Namunai Adabioti Tojik* (1926). Jura L.'s father became a journalist, joining the newly founded *Pravda Bukhary*. After 1929, when Tajikistan became an independent republic, he moved to Stalinabad/Dushanbe. For the rest of his life he would work at the Lahuti theater while continuing to publish poetry in the new Tajik press and organizing drama circles for children at the local youth center, the House of Pioneers. Jura L. himself was born in Stalinabad just before World War II. He would grow up with the city, eventually attending the newly formed Polytechnic Institute when it opened in 1961. A construction engineer by training, he was recruited into party work, spending many years on various municipal committees.

The path from Bukhara to Stalinabad was not unusual. In fact, a large part of the "native" intelligentsia in Tajikistan through the 1950s were Persian speakers

from Bukhara and Samarkand, two of the most important centers of learning in the region. They included pioneers of Tajik-Soviet culture, such as Sadriddin Ayni (1878–1954), who worked as educators and writers before the revolution, as well as younger intellectuals such as Ghani Abdullo and Jalol Ikromī, who made their careers after the Bolsheviks came to power.[10] People like Jura L.'s father came to develop theaters, teach in the schools, edit the republic's newspapers, and run its administration.

Some of those who came to Stalinabad from Bukhara or Samarkand in the 1930s, particularly in the wake of the 1936–1938 purges, found a shelter from the terror. For children of "enemies of the people," or for those who had fallen under suspicion but escaped imprisonment, Tajikistan offered the possibility of riding out the storm, and even being sheltered from prosecution by local officials desperate for qualified cadres. Yet living in Tajikistan did not shield one from the terror completely. The intelligentsia that had arrived since the late 1920s fell under suspicion and was persecuted by local authorities, just as their counterparts had been in Uzbekistan.[11] Those whose families had been ensnared by the terror elsewhere and came to Tajikistan for safety still carried the stigma of disgrace or being children of "enemies of the people." They lived on the margins and were often the last to receive housing or any other benefits the state could distribute. Thus the family of composer Ziaudullo Shahidi, whose father was labeled an "enemy of the people," lived in a one-room mudbrick house until 1943, when the Iranian-Tajik poet Abdulqasim Lahuti intervened with local authorities and helped the family get a larger apartment.[12] For others the label continued to cause problems well into the 1950s. The father of the literary historian Hursheda Otahonova, a communist, had been arrested in 1937. Although Otahonova's father was released during the war, he had not been reinstated in the party at the time of his death in 1952. Nevertheless, he remained a committed communist and sought repeatedly to have his expulsion from the party overturned. Otahonova sincerely believed in the party's mission as well, but her father's conviction precluded her entry into its ranks and may have also initially blocked her acceptance for graduate study, despite her being one of the top students in her class.[13]

Stalinism inspired fear and resistance but also fierce loyalty among some of the newer entrants into the party. The literary historian Hudoĭnazar Asozoda recalled that his father, a laborer who attended a Soviet school and became a village schoolteacher, "was a believer in Stalin. He really accepted the socialist order. He often reminded us that there had never been an order like this one in history."[14] When Stalin died in March 1953, the family was mourning an infant who had lived only eight days, yet Asozoda's father immediately began organizing a ceremony for the deceased Soviet leader at the local school.[15]

Although the region was far from the fighting, the Great Patriotic War played a crucial role in the formation of the Central Asian elite. As scholars have argued, the war was crucial for the legitimization of the Soviet system.[16] In this sense it may have played an even greater role in Central Asia, where the war effort, while imposing some additional hardships, also became a collective endeavor. The subsequent celebration of locals' role in the war cemented it in memory as a shared enterprise.[17] Marianne Kamp noted that soldiers came back from the war with a stronger sense of belonging in the USSR as well as greater openness regarding the role of women in the family and economic life.[18] The evacuation of people and industries brought specialists and cultural elites from Moscow and Leningrad to cities like Tashkent and Dushanbe. Although most would return to their places of origin, many would stay and work as engineers, teachers, and managers for decades after the war.[19]

The war was a fundamental experience for those who fought as well as for those who stayed behind. The future historian Aslamsho, who grew up in a village in the country's southeast, described the war as the most important influence of his life. "I was a seven- or eight-year-old boy working in the kolkhoz in place of those who went to the front. Not just me, others my age worked, too. What made us work so actively to help the front and restore the economy? Was it the party? No. The government? No. It was our highly elevated patriotic consciousness." Aslamsho was not just repeating slogans. His experience of the war was personal, as he explained, because his father was at the front and returned a decorated officer, and his two older brothers also were at the front: "They suffered at the front, they were wounded, and we here were hungry."[20] Memories of the war period, and persistent questions (why did this happen?), would lead him to study history in the 1950s.

It was not only party members in good standing who went off to fight. Over 260,000 young men from Tajikistan went to the front, at a time when the whole population of the republic was just under 1,500,000.[21] The future academic Mohammad Osimov (Osimī) had hoped to go to Leningrad for graduate work in physics, but instead found himself sent to command a battery defending the city.[22] While some may have volunteered out of a sense of patriotism, others hoped to erase the stigma of the terror. Ikromī recounts the stories of several intellectuals who volunteered for service because they had been accused of disloyalty and had been living under a cloud; they wanted to prove their loyalty to the party and rehabilitate themselves.[23]

The Soviet treatment of some veterans also underscored the cruelties of postwar Stalinism. Ashur Haydarov had studied drawing in his native Samarkand and was working as an artist in the Uzbek language newspaper *Lenin Yuli* when he heard the news that war had broken out between Germany and the USSR.

The next day he went to his editor, Sharof Rashidov (the future party boss of Uzbekistan), and told him, "Everything is boiling inside me, the whole day I'm thinking about one thing, I'm asking you to let me volunteer for the army." Two months later he made his way to training camp, along with Rashidov and another colleague. He was eventually sent to the front as a second lieutenant in the infantry.[24] In 1942, while fighting in Ukraine, Haydarov was taken prisoner and put in a POW camp. There he was compelled to join the anti-Soviet Turkestan Legion being formed with the help of some Central Asian émigrés. Haydarov claims he did so unwillingly, and escaped at the first opportunity. He joined partisans in Poland, finally spending the last months of the war fighting Ukrainian separatists with a detachment from the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD).

Demobilized at the end of June 1945, Haydarov made his way back to Samarkand. His father was still in Leningrad, one of his brothers was near Konigsberg, another had died near Stalingrad. Several days after his arrival, Haydarov was asked to come to the office of the local NKVD and questioned about his time as a POW. Although released, he was denied a passport and was told not to leave the city without permission. Nevertheless, despite the threat that seemed to be hanging over him and general postwar poverty, his return to civilian life went smoothly at first. In August 1945 he was invited to join the local Artists' Union, reuniting with some of his teachers and mentors from before the war.[25] Then, in 1949, he was suddenly arrested and sentenced to fifteen years for collaborating with the enemy—a not uncommon fate for those who had been prisoners of war and then escaped. Haydarov was relatively lucky—his drawings earned him some protection from the criminal leaders within the camp, while camp management put him in a brigade with artists. Still, he was shocked by the brutality, the forced labor, the depravity of some of the prisoners. He was finally released in 1955. Soon Haydarov returned to his work, and in 1957 was even taking part in the second Ten Day Festival of Tajik Culture in Moscow. He was able to rebuild his life in Stalinabad, eventually becoming one of the republic's most prominent visual artists. It was only during perestroika that he found out he had been completely rehabilitated in the 1950s.[26]

Haydarov's story illustrates some of the complexities of the war experience for Central Asian soldiers and civilians. Although Central Asia was far from the fighting, the war and postwar paranoia caused upheaval in people's lives. At the same time, there was a sense (actively promoted in postwar decades) that the whole region had taken part in a great battle against evil and helped the Soviet Union emerge victorious. Many of the returning veterans felt emboldened to play a more active part in shaping their republics in the subsequent decades. Scholars of the postwar Russian intelligentsia have noted that veterans of the Great Patriotic War played an important role in the reform communism of the post-Stalin

years. They had seen European cities where the quality of life was much higher than what they knew at home, and their experience as veterans gave them the confidence (and political capital) to push for reform.[27] The same was true for some Central Asian veterans.

Haydarov himself remained proud of his military service and, until his death, stayed in close contact with some of his veteran friends from other parts of the union. Every interlocutor I spoke to who remembered the post-war period recalled a time of optimism. As Rasul Khodizoda noted, "After the war life was difficult, but we felt cultural, scholarly, and spiritual life in the political environment of the country growing, . . . The power of the Soviet government grew. . . . The influence of the government and communist party spread out over every part of the world."[28] Munira Shahidi explained that "the feeling of victory seemed to leave a mark on my whole generation. We felt that we were right. In any case, that was the ideology, that's what we were told (*chto nam vnushali*) and we believed it."[29]

Stalinabad was still a small city in the early 1950s, though increasingly cosmopolitan. It had once again become a refuge for some who were unwelcome elsewhere, including families of repressed old Bolsheviks and the prerevolutionary intelligentsia, Jewish professionals seeking shelter during the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, and Tajik-speaking elites from Samarkand and Bukhara. Finally, it became the home to Iranian leftists exiled after the shah's crackdown on the Tudeh Party in 1949 and again after the CIA-supported coup against Mohammed Mossadeq in 1953.[30] All of these people would play an important role in the city's postwar intellectual life.

Stalinabad's cultural and intellectual life in the postwar years took place almost entirely within a narrow band around the main street, Prospekt Lenina. Many of the families that represented the republic's cultural elite were housed in one of two nearby wooden apartment houses—one for writers and the other for musicians and theater directors. Munira Shahidi recalled that as a result her "childhood was happy—I lived surrounded by poets, writers, musicians, and artists."[31] Children imitated their parents, recreating their artistic world in the courtyard. Jura L. recalled: "All of the parents were actors and they would come home and say to each other, 'This evening will be a rehearsal of such a play or this evening such a performance will take place and so forth.' Well, we imitated them, we created a kind of *kruzhok* [reading circle] and tried to create a stage set and paint it."[32] By the 1950s, a new generation was growing up that could think of itself as native to the republic and model itself on the life being created by their parents.

At the same time, the growing cosmopolitanism of the city meant that the Tajik intelligentsia growing up in the postwar years had several points of reference

for thinking about its role and mission. Those whose ancestors claimed status as Islamic notables drew on their own family histories, rearticulating a notion of "service to the people" for their work in Soviet academic institutions and in the professions.[33] Many intellectuals, especially those who came from Samarkand and Bukhara, looked to the jadids as modernizers who wanted to advance their culture. But since the late 1920s jadidism had become a byword for Pan-Turkism and any revival of it deemed anti-Soviet.[34] Mentioning the jadids became a taboo. The writer Sadriddin Ayni provided the ideal connection. While associated with the jadids in the pre-revolutionary period, he had managed to survive the political fluctuations of the 1930s and emerged as someone who connected this pre-Soviet past with the present of the new intelligentsia. Especially for those who had gone to university in the 1940s and 1950s, while Ayni was still alive, the writer and scholar served as a model and often as a mentor.[35]

The younger generation sometimes also looked to the Russian and Jewish intelligentsia that came to the republic in the 1930s and in the postwar period. These groups brought not just their professional expertise but a commitment to education, knowledge, art, and service. Many brought a personal or family history of repression that gave them a point of identification with some of the locals who had suffered in the 1930s. If there was optimism in these postwar years, it was tempered by poverty, the memory of the terror, and the paranoia of the late Stalin era. Shahidi remembered developing a great love for literature, "especially Russian literature," as a pupil in the 1950s, under the influence of teachers like Berta Gamarnik. "I was very lucky that I had a teacher who really loved her work," Shahidi explained. But she learned that they were also united by misfortune. According to Munira, Gamarnik was the daughter of a military commander who had been sentenced to a Gulag camp.[36] One day she asked Munira, "Did you know that your grandfather was sent to Siberia on the same day as my father?"[37] Such connections played a contradictory role—they encouraged identification, and even solidarity, with Russians, Jews, and other across the Soviet Union, binding people together, but it was a solidarity of suffering at the hands of an unjust regime.

One result of these interactions was that the emerging postwar educated elite acquired a sense of itself as a group that drew on diverse sources. There was the notion of service to the community (increasingly understood as the "nation") inherited from prerevolutionary elite who actively inculcated this notion to pupils in the new institutions of higher learning. But the passion for secular knowledge carried by newcomers to the republic also played a role. Finally, this emerging elite became increasingly transnational, in the sense that it traveled, studied, and established networks far beyond its own republic.[38]

Education and Social Mobility

In 1944, Rasul Khodizoda moved to Tashkent to start university. The timing proved fortuitous. Orientalists from Petersburg and Moscow had been evacuated to Tashkent during the war, and some of them were invited to lecture at the university. Khodizoda studied with luminaries such as Evgenii Eduardovich Bertels (1890–1957), Andrei Nikolaevich Kononov (1906–1986), and Mikhail Andreev (1873–1948). The latter seems to have played a particularly important role in Khodizoda's life. At Andreev's house Khodizoda saw a personal library the likes of which he had never seen before. Besides the vast collection of books, there were photo albums, including those documenting Andreev's travels in India. Andreev told Khodizoda about a kruzhok on oriental studies that he had organized in the 1920s, and, with Andreev's encouragement, Khodizoda revived the group.[39]

New institutions of higher education were created or expanded throughout the USSR in the postwar era. As Benjamin Tromly argued in his study of universities in Russia and Ukraine in this period, these institutions were "training grounds for the military-industrial complex, showcases of Soviet cultural and economic accomplishment, and, especially after Stalin's death, valued tools in Soviet cultural diplomacy."[40] The USSR was hardly alone in trying to use higher education to create a new elite; empires, anti-colonial movements, and post-colonial states all hoped to create technically competent individuals loyal to their particular projects.[41] The Soviet Union, the United States, and some European countries became involved in setting up universities in the developing world; their goal was not just to impart technical knowledge, but to create new kinds of subjects—thinking in terms of their nation rather than their home village or region, forward looking, and rational.[42] Within the Soviet Union, education was openly treated as an ideological activity meant to create technical skills, faith in the revolution, and loyalty to party and state. Yet the educational institutions set up by the Soviet state also allowed administrators, teachers, and even students significant room to define the specific content of courses and the overall experience of education. These institutions produced a national technocratic elite within a Soviet context.

Studying Tajik literature in Tashkent was a natural choice in 1944—even though that city was the capital of Uzbekistan. It was only in the postwar years, as higher education throughout the Soviet Union expanded, that Tajikistan got its own university (a medical school had been established in 1939). Gafurov, installed as first secretary after the war, seems to have played an active role in expanding higher education in the republic. In a note to Andrei Zhdanov in 1946

FIGURE 2.1. Mohammad Osimov (Osimī) lecturing at the Polytechnic Institute in Stalinabad (Dushanbe), 1950s. Courtesy of the Russian State Archive of Photo and Video Documentation.

he emphasized that establishing a university in Stalinabad would help achieve Soviet foreign policy goals: "It is important to remember the geographical position of Tajikistan, that it is in the vicinity of Middle East Countries—Iran and Afghanistan—that have a population close to the Tajik in language and from an anthropological and ethnographic point of view. It makes sense to study the nature, economies, and populations of these neighbors not only from the center of the Union, but also from the Tajik SSR, where specialists from the local population make the best cadres for studying populations close in language."[43] Although it is unclear if Gafurov's appeal to Soviet foreign policy interests had any influence over officials in Moscow, the proposal was approved and the university established in 1948. The local branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences became its own independent institution several years later, with Ayni installed as its first

president. The 1950s saw the opening of a Polytechnic Institute and expansion of teacher's colleges and other schools.

For Gafurov, Ayni, and other Tajik intellectuals, expanding education fulfilled both economic and nation-building needs. As Ayni told Khodizoda, **s**tudying the history of Tajik literature meant "serving Tajik science and culture." "For that," Ayni said, "you need to be in the center of Tajik science and culture. . . . You have to go to Stalinabad . . . where [Bobojon Gafurov] is making every effort to gather cadres for Tajik scholarship."[44] Similarly, Sulton Umarov, then the rector of Tashkent State University but later Ayni's successor as president of Tajikistan's Academy of Sciences, emphasized: "The road for all Tajiks now leads to Stalinabad. Bobojon Gafurov is following a wise policy of gathering all qualified cadres . . . since the foundation of our university a number of people have been invited to Tajikistan or gone there on their own initiative. You are also a qualified Tajik cadre and your going there will be a benefit to Tajikistan and also to you."[45]

The new institutions broadened access to higher education. Children of the "old" elite continued to pursue university studies, but more and more students would come from poorer peasant families, even from the remote corners of the republic. Prior to 1948, an aspiring student's best chance at a higher education was to attend one of the teacher's colleges located around the republic; a few could then continue to a university education in Tashkent or one of the other Soviet cities. Graduate study always meant leaving the republic. The university and the academy of sciences, with its ability to supervise research and award *kandidat nauk* degrees, made it possible to pursue undergraduate and advanced study within the republic. These individuals quickly found work. The university's first class of philologists, for example, produced graduates who went on to key roles in publishing and academia within the republic in the postwar decades and into the independence period.[46]

For those without a family background in education—whether religious or secular—the university and technical schools presented a special attraction. Aslamsho, who came from a village in Darwaz in the foothills of the Pamir Mountains, contrasted life in the city with the poverty and closed-mindedness of his home village. In 1949, he recalled, after intensive agitation from party and Komsomol officials, two girls became the first to go to Dushanbe to study. As a result, their families were ostracized. "The old, feudal-patriarchal relations interfered and the clergy labeled them unbelievers (*kofir*) and forbade anyone to visit their parents," Aslamsho recalled. The girls studied at the pedagogical institute and returned to the village, presumably to assume teaching posts. "We looked at them lovingly and with jealousy, and the elders looked at them with hate. They returned as city people: their clothes, their hairstyle, their manner of speaking at such a high level, this striking beauty, all of this inspired in us the idea that it was also necessary . . .

to go study, at any price."[47] In Stalinabad, Aslamsho explained, a young villager was exposed to things he or she had never seen before: "hot water, electricity, a dormitory, bedding that was changed every week, a cafeteria with food three times a day, and you could live there for free and they gave you a stipend on top of that." These conditions, in turn, further stimulated the desire to study.[48]

Aslamsho most likely exaggerated the conditions in the dormitories; it is clear that many of them still had trouble meeting these standards even in the 1970s, when resources were much greater than in the 1950s.[49] What is interesting is how important he believed the university experience to be in one's transformation from peasant to cultured urbanite. Certain kinds of dress, regularly changed clean bedding, and access to electricity were all accouterments of a "cultured" person and freed one to develop his or her intellectual potential.[50] The economist Rashid Rakhimov also recalled how much attention one of his Russian teachers paid to grooming. The teacher would periodically ask the boys to put their hands on the desk, then trim their fingernails or send them out to wash up. Although such behavior seems to carry colonial overtones, it was hardly different from what modernizing elites in other countries hoped to do through their educational institutions in this period. Emphasis on comportment and hygiene was not unusual for a school that was taking peasant boys and girls and preparing them to be white-collar professionals. Rakhimov viewed this attention to the length of his fingernails or the cleanliness of his hands as particularly important in helping restore normal civilian life after the war.[51] Shukur Sultonov, who taught at the university in Leninobod, similarly recalled that one of the university's strengths was that "teachers were interested in everything, from clothing and up to culture and worldview."[52]

Similar stories came from people with different backgrounds. Thus Manzar M., from Gharm, contrasted the closed-mindedness of his village, where, in his words, even wearing your hair slightly longer than normal could make you an outcast, with the broader horizons offered by study in the capital. By the time I interviewed him in 2012 and 2013 Manzar had grown increasingly critical of the Soviet Union, especially the enforced atheism and the corruption he says he observed from the late 1970s. Nevertheless, he spoke of studying in Dushanbe as a transformational experience. It was at the university that he met his wife, the daughter of a Tajik soldier who had been wounded at the front and the Ukrainian Catholic nurse who cared for him. Both Manzar and his wife became historians.[53] He taught at the university for many years, eventually going on to do graduate work at the Academy of Sciences. Inspired by the campaign for the industrialization of the republic, Manzar chose the history of the Southern Tajikistan Territorial Production Complex as his dissertation topic.

Whether entering the humanities and social sciences or more practical fields like engineering or architecture, many of the young men and women felt that

education gave them a chance to be part of something bigger, to provide a larger service to their republic. It was a message actively instilled by their teachers. The point of literary research, Ayni explained to Khodizoda, was "to serve Tajik science and culture." In other words, it was a way to contribute to the articulation and dissemination of Tajik national identity and to link older Persianate traditions with the Soviet present. The notion of serving Tajikistan was not limited to those who went into the humanities. The students who chose technical subjects were attracted by taking part in another big project, namely the industrialization of the republic. For Jura L., studying in the construction faculty at the new Polytechnic Institute was exciting and "prestigious" because it was associated with the new, widely publicized projects that promised to transform the republic and lift standards of living.[54] Olimjon H., who had gone to school in Leninobod, decided to focus on industrial refrigeration. To him, studying this seemingly unglamorous topic pointed to the possibility of participating in the transformation of his city. "We had a canning factory, and the food industry was being developed, but there were no refrigerators, the big kind, and we wanted to be specialists in this sphere. . . . It was new."[55] Even seemingly mundane specializations enabled many students to take part in the most exciting projects of the day, whether the transformation of the republic through industrialization or the preservation and development of Tajik culture through research.

How successful were the universities in preparing the kind of technical, managerial, and cultural elite the republic required? In 1966, the republic was short some 32,000 specialists, meaning among other things that industrialization required importing people from other parts of the USSR or using underqualified cadres. The natural policy response was to try to expand the capacity of the institutes and access to education, but this was easier said than done.[56] By 1976, the republic's universities and institutes had 2,845 researchers and teachers, including 43 doctors of science and 783 with a candidate of sciences degree. Combined they enrolled a total of 40,867 students, of whom 24,091 were regular "day" students, 3,885 were taking night courses, and 12,891 were following "distance" courses.[57] But it was clear that the system could not keep up. Inspectors from Moscow complained that Tajikistan's universities and institutes "relied very heavily on recent graduates for teaching." Those sent to Moscow and Leningrad for graduate study—with the idea that they would return to Tajikistan and become lecturers—were poorly prepared compared to their Russian peers and needed a year of preparatory work to catch up. The problem was particularly acute in mathematics and the sciences.[58]

One issue was language. In theory, it was possible to study in Tajik or Russian, giving students who had attended Tajik schools, especially those from rural areas, a chance at a university education. But the quality of Tajik-language instruction

was often poor, in part because there were few qualified instructors who could teach at a university level in the language and in part due to a lack of textbooks. One inspection from 1969 found that most courses taught in Tajik "are thoroughly lacking in the necessary literature, and an additional difficulty arises from the lack of Russian-Tajik dictionaries for specific terminology."[59] Although some work was being done to provide study materials in Tajik, another report six years later lamented that the "students of the preparatory division [of the Tajik Polytechnic Institute] are mostly supplied with high school textbooks and when it comes to math the Tajik-language groups have only half the textbooks and exercise books they need."[60] In addition, the republic had a perpetual shortage of qualified Russian teachers at the school level, and those who were available tended to stay in the larger cities.[61]

Preparatory courses were supposed to democratize access to the university-level education, giving students from weaker schools, or those who had entered the work force straight after school and now wanted to study, a chance to catch up. As the example of the textbooks shows they lacked the resources to overcome some of these inequalities. Between 1973 and 1978 almost one-third of students were unable to complete the preparatory studies at the Polytechnic (although the number was decreasing), and almost one-fourth of those who completed the courses dropped out of the institute, mostly as a result of poor academic performance.[62] The state university faced similar problems. Perhaps as a result, the number of applicants for the preparatory courses was decreasing, from a high of 711 applications per 275 seats in 1976 to 498 in 1977.[63]

Nor were these problems limited to the university-level institutions. The professional-technical colleges (*proffesional'no tekhnicheskoe uchilishche*), which were supposed to help draw rural youth into the skilled work force, also had trouble attracting students and, with those they did accept, producing graduates. As I show in the next chapter, the failure of these institutions became a growing concern for planners, economists, and sociologists in Central Asian republics and in Moscow, as it undermined their goals for social and economic transformation in the republic. The failures of these schools limited social mobility, and left the republic's nascent industry as well as its collective farms with a shortage of specialists. It also created yet another rift between those who were able to take advantage of the social mobility offered by the system and those who could not.

Beyond the Classroom

University life was not just about education and opportunity—it was a crucial step in socialization, especially for those students who did not come from elite

families. Student groups within the universities and colleges and the growing range of arts and entertainment outside the institutions filled in the hours between classes and studying. Jura L., accepted into the first class of the newly formed Polytechnic Institute, recalled the influence of then rector Osimov (Osimī), the decorated war veteran who had studied physics in Tashkent and later earned a doctorate in philosophy.[64] According to Jura L., Osimī encouraged the institute to develop a lively cultural life, including amateur theater, sports, and literary events. Osimī also personally took groups of students to the theater.[65] Jura's contemporary Ibrohim, who studied journalism at the state university in the mid-to-late 1960s, also recalled the vibrant social life available to students in the city, including gatherings at dance floors. "Young people, at the end of the working day, whether students or not, would go to the dance floors to relax," Ibrohim said. Like Jura, he saw visits to the theater as particularly important: "people were taught to go to the theatre, watch a play, and then there would be discussions, including students. . . . I was also one of the active commentators, I took part in critiquing the actors, I couldn't do anything myself but I could critique others."[66] Later, when he himself became a teacher, Ibrohim also made a point of taking his students to the theater. Unlike Jura, Ibrohim did not come from an artistic or intellectual family—his father sold dried fruit at the bazaar and his elder brother was a miner. He emphasized the role teachers like Osimī and the city's cultural institutions played in his own transformation into a "cultured person."

Theater, film, and dance were not the only extracurricular activities available to students. Academic and semiacademic kruzhki were equally important. Such groups were supposed to be led by particularly eager students, with faculty mentors guiding their studies and work. Students in the natural sciences got a taste of doing advanced research work; those working in the humanities could participate in research on local history and culture. By the early 1970s there were 233 such groups in the republic, spread around its various institutes and two universities.[67] Students in archaeology kruzhki were particularly active as participants in expeditions, and were valued, no doubt, for the free labor they provided. Students in the natural sciences, too, were encouraged to present papers at annual faculty conferences.[68]

Literary evenings were a big part of social life both at the state university and especially at the Polytechnic. In 1964, a professor at the university opened a reading room, where he gathered books from around the world. One of his students recalled that "the atmosphere in the reading room was such that students would stay for hours."[69] According to Abdurashid Samadov, who studied literature at the university and was a student of Khodizoda, it was actually at the Polytechnic in the 1960s that one discovered the key Russian poets of the thaw, including

Yevgeny Yevtushenko and Andrei Voznesensky, as well as more controversial poets who were coming back into vogue like Marina Tsvetaeva and Sergey Yesenin. At the same time, the thaw enabled the rendering of contemporary and classical Persian poetry into the Tajik Cyrillic script, as well as its translation into Russian, and also saw translations of works from Europe and the Americas, including those by Walt Whitman and Pablo Neruda. All of these provided new inspiration and points of reference to the young intelligentsia.[70] It was in these literary gatherings in the 1960s and early 1970s that some of the biggest names of postwar Tajik literature also made their appearance—poets like Loiq Sherali, Bozor Sobir, and Ubajd Rajab.[71] Such events helped socialize students into a certain kind of intellectual life, and encouraged their self-identification as cultural leaders connected to other Soviet elites but with their own local mission. While inculcating a Soviet notion of culturedness, which emphasized public engagement with literature and the arts, the content of these evenings often pushed the limits of Soviet ideology, in ways that even people like Osimī probably could not have predicted.

Two other institutions played an important role for young specialists. Many of the people I spoke with saw the Komsomol as an important stepping-stone in their lives. For those who came from the remote parts of the republic, the Komsomol often played a crucial role in encouraging them to aim for an education, even intervening with parents if necessary, and organizing their travel to the capital so that they could take entrance exams. Those who studied at the university or one of the institutes in Dushanbe and Leninobod associated the Komsomol with literary evenings, discussions with foreign socialist leaders, and excursions throughout the republic and beyond. But many also praised the Komsomol for helping to instill discipline, honesty, and initiative in its members, and saw it playing an important role in their own formation. Working in the Komsomol allowed one "to learn oneself."[72] For those who were truly active, the work provided valuable organizational experience, boosted confidence, and garnered attention from party leaders and managers. Along with the literary evenings and theater outings, party and Komsomol meetings encouraged students and teachers to think of themselves as active agents not only in their own lives, but in the ongoing transformations of their societies and the broader struggle for justice in the world. Shukur Sultonov, a young teacher of history at the university at Leninobod in the 1960s, recalled that "what was noteworthy [about the time] was also the party and workplace meetings. . . . They were interesting and vividly memorable. And even though in the political language of the day no one spoke of 'pluralism,' 'democracy,' or 'glasnost,' people raised sharp, difficult questions."[73]

In the postwar years, service in the military became a regular rite of passage for Central Asian males, as it did for all Soviet young men. Central Asians rarely served in the elite forces, and many seemed to have been sent to construction

brigades.[74] Army service carried its own difficulties. For many it would be the first time in a primarily Russian-speaking milieu and could lead to cultural conflicts. Abuse in the Soviet military was rife, especially after the change from a three-year service to two gave rise to the phenomenon of *dedovshchina*, or hazing of more junior soldiers by the "grandfathers." Yet it also provided recruits with the opportunity to learn new skills, to improve their Russian, and to carry a certain pride at having completed the service. A good performance in the army could lead to a recommendation for party membership or further study.[75] According to some of my interlocutors, a man was considered proper marriage material only after he had served. Those who entered the military after the university did so as junior officers rather than enlisted men, something they were proud of. It was in the army that some got their start as managers within their chosen professions, whether as choral conductors, such as the future leader of the Ayni Opera and Ballet's choir, or engineers like Olimjon H.[76]

Decades later, my interviewees recalled that these institutions and extracurricular activities encouraged them to see culture and service as something that continued far beyond the university years. They would try to pass on these values as they in turn became teachers, administrators, and scholars. These shared experiences also gave them connections that proved useful throughout their careers.

To Moscow, Tashkent, or Stalinabad?

Ayni, Gafurov, and their successors hoped to make Stalinabad/Dushanbe a center of Tajik learning and culture. By the mid-1950s Stalinabad had a university, academy, museums, and cultural institutions, allowing it to claim status as a kind of modern successor to the ancient cities of Bukhara and Samarkand. At the same time, many young men and women now had the opportunity to study in other parts of the Soviet Union, including its most cosmopolitan cities, Moscow and Leningrad.

When Olimjon H. was choosing where to study, he desperately wanted to go to Leningrad Polytechnic. He explained that the idea had grabbed him when he was still in school and he wanted to go beyond his own city (Leninobod), and even Dushanbe or Tashkent: "I had never been to Moscow or Leningrad. But we had seen films, there were no televisions yet, we read about it in books, and we wanted to see it and live there for a while, to study in Leningrad."[77] Although he was not able to study at the Leningrad Polytechnic, he did manage to study in Moscow for several years.

Relatively few went to Leningrad or Moscow for their entire course of undergraduate study, although by 1966 there were over 500 Tajik students completing

at least part of their degrees in Russia's major cities; out of those, over 400 did so in Moscow or Leningrad.[78] Many who had ambitions to do graduate work tried to go there. Studying in the Soviet "center" was prestigious and probably offered quicker career advancement then graduate work within the republic or even Tashkent. Cultural life in the Soviet capital was also attractive. Khodizoda recalled his excitement as he traveled to Moscow by train, interrogating his Russian fellow passengers about the city's theaters and museums.[79] Similarly, the future architect and city planner Naim Ëkubov recalled the five days of travel to Moscow as filled with "discussions of the future, the institutes where we would study, though we knew nothing about them . . . and finally [there was] Moscow, the city of my dreams, the city I had been thinking of all the previous days."[80] Qahhor Mahkamov, who would spend several decades at the helm of the republic's planning committee (Gosplan) and eventually became first secretary during perestroika, went to Leningrad with weak Russian—he had studied in a Tajik-language school—but recalled that while at the mining institute he and a friend "signed up for evening courses, where we studied literature and art. It was in Leningrad that I started to understand what opera, ballet, and art is."[81]

Many of the people I interviewed described the Soviet capital's cultural life as one of the most memorable aspects of their time there. As Mahkamov's reflection suggests, it was also part of the "working on the self" that young specialists were encouraged to undertake during their studies. But Khodizoda also pointed to something else he says he experienced for the first time in Moscow and Leningrad. Walking the streets of these cities, reading in the Lenin library, and visiting museums, he gained an appreciation for Russian history and resolved to continue studying his own: "The trip to Moscow and Leningrad brought me to another world and another atmosphere, which awakened in me the longing and desire to continue my scholarly work. I felt that this atmosphere of freedom for young people who are at the beginning of their life's path is very necessary. In a free atmosphere the road becomes clear, and obstacles to firm decisions are removed. In the new atmosphere of Leningrad my plans for future work gradually came into view and its approximate outlines gradually took shape in my thoughts."[82] This association of Leningrad with "freedom" may sound strange to a Western reader, especially considering that the author is talking about 1952—a period of heightened paranoia, suspicion, and the "Doctors' plot," in which Jewish physicians were accused of trying to poison party leaders. But what the city seemed to offer to Khodizoda were endless possibilities to study, to work, to improve himself, and to connect to a wider world, all while being of some use to his own society.

Studying in Moscow or other Russian cities was not without difficulty. First, families were often opposed to letting their sons, and especially daughters, study so far from home, something noted by sociologists and confirmed in my

interviews.[83] There were several explanations for this—fear of delayed marriage, or worse, intermarriage with non-Tajiks, or that the son or daughter might stay away and thus deprive the family of needed labor. For those who did go, Moscow and Leningrad could be especially alienating, and there was usually no family support network to help in times of trouble, although older and more experienced students could be an important resource.[84] As Jeff Sahadeo has shown, migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus could face discrimination and racial stereotyping. Poor knowledge of the Russian language might be a handicap in Dushanbe, but in Moscow it could turn one into a "nonperson," shunned by officials and ordinary citizens alike.[85] Clearly, many students from Tajikistan who managed to gain admission in Leningrad and Moscow, especially those who came to study technical subjects, found themselves unprepared. Returning home as a "failed" student was no doubt traumatic. Yet Sahadeo also found that on the whole these migrants were grateful for the social mobility that Moscow and Leningrad provided, and many also praised the liberating effects of being in these cosmopolitan cities. They were able to make these cities feel like home, in part by thinking of themselves as Soviet citizens who had more in common with the milieu they found there than with what they might find abroad.[86]

There was also the matter of being needed at home. Many of the university students and those who went to graduate study in Moscow or Leningrad were funded by scholarships from the Tajik republic. They were expected to return home as highly qualified specialists to build up educational institutions, conduct research, and manage the economy. After Khodizoda had completed his doctoral studies, he was invited to remain in Moscow and work in the Committee for People's Literature of the USSR Union of Writers. Ayni insisted that Khodizoda come back to Tajikistan. "You need to think of this not just in terms of what is beneficial for you, since you will advance more quickly in Moscow, and compared to Stalinabad life is easier there, but rather Tajikistan's need for people. . . . And after you have shown yourself well within Tajik society you can (after 3–4 years) go on to further doctoral studies."[87]

For those who studied in Moscow or Leningrad, the experience provided a lifelong network both intellectual and professional. These relationships were later developed through interactions in institutions like the writer's union, through professional seminars, and amid vacations in Soviet sanatoriums in places like Kislovodsk and Yalta. Khodizoda's time in Moscow helped him become a well-known figure in the USSR Union of Writers and a regular contributor to publications like *Druzhba Narodov*. As chapter 3 shows, economists and social scientists who spent time outside the republic later used the relationships established during their graduate studies to push their ideas in planning institutions. And in some cases, those contacts helped save intellectuals when they fell afoul of

authorities in the republic. Thus, when the writer Juma Odinaev's novel satirizing the party elite was pulled off the shelves on the day of publication in 1979, his main supporters were the Georgian singer-songwriter and novelist (and a favorite of Russian intellectuals) Bulat Okudzhava, the (Russian) head of the USSR Union of Writers Georgi Markov, and the Orientalist scholar Iosif Braginskii.[88]

Beginning in the 1960s, other centers beyond Moscow and Leningrad increasingly beckoned for the postwar intelligentsia. Tajikistan, after all, had a special role to play in the fight against imperialism and the liberation of the (post)colonial world, and this was reflected in student life. The local branches of the Committee for Solidarity with Countries of Asia and Africa, or the Committee on Women, mobilized university students for rallies, where the poet Mirzo Tursunzoda was often a speaker. Writers, artists, and students signed messages declaring their solidarity with the peoples of Asia and Africa in their struggle for "complete liberation from imperialism."[89] Young men and women were encouraged to engage with the "awakening East," and this in turn lessened the hold of Moscow on their imaginations. Of course, "East" and "West" were not mutually exclusive. Munira Shahidi, for example, was working as a Komsomol translator, helping guide tourists around Tajikistan, when she was presented with the opportunity to travel to India as the translator for a delegation that included the India specialist Yevgenii Chelyshev. The visit inspired her to devote her life to the study of the East. With Chelyshev's encouragement, she enrolled as a graduate student at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow, although Gafurov persuaded her to focus on Tajik literature rather than Indian philology. For others, this "East," whether real or imaginary, became a repository of cultural values and traditions they worried were being lost in Tajikistan itself.

Divisions

In 1966, a letter arrived at Communist party headquarters in Moscow from eight Tajik communists complaining about "localism" in party work. Specifically, the petitioners insisted that party cadres from Samarkand and Bukhara were being pushed out and replaced by those from Leninobod: "In the collective organs of the republic, jobs are allocated according to a territorial principal, and as a reaction to this Leninobodi localism other localisms are forming, including Pamiri, Gharmi, and others." The issue was forwarded to the Tajikistani party organization, which took it up at a Politburo meeting in November. Jabbor Rasulov, the first secretary of Tajikistan's Communist Party, admitted that such a problem existed at the collective farm level and elsewhere in the republic, but insisted that the party was aware of the situation and was doing its best. This satisfied

the inspectors in Moscow. At the dawn of the Brezhnev age, interference in local party affairs was kept to a minimum.[90]

The 1920s and 1930s had seen an influx of Bukharan and Samarkandi intellectuals who formed the intellectual and cultural elite of the Republic of Tajikistan. But the expansion of higher education decreased the reliance on these people as new, much larger, cohorts of cadres made their way through institutions of higher education and party organizations like the Komsomol. Since Leninobod was the most developed part of the republic it appears that it became, perhaps unintentionally, the source for personnel at the highest level and even for students.[91] In principle, the university and institutes were supposed to help erase such differences, promoting instead a more unified Tajik-Soviet identity. University officials tried to make sure that young people from one region did not share dorm rooms, but were rather forced to bunk with those from another part of the republic.[92] Yet both in university admissions and in management, the dominance of Leninobodis persisted, as did divisions among students, so that it was not unheard of to have "fights of a regional character between guys from one region and those of another."[93]

Already by the 1950s life in the larger cities of Central Asia—Stalinabad/Dushanbe, Leninobod, and Tashkent—was very different from that in the smaller provincial cities, let alone rural areas. The larger cities cultivated cosmopolitan atmospheres, bringing together not just people from around the republic and region but from the USSR as a whole. In the southern Tajikistani city of Kulob, by contrast, a future literary critic remembered only a handful of Russians, Ossetians, Tajik-speaking Jews from Samarkand and Bukhara, and Tatars. Almost everyone else was from the surrounding countryside. Improving his Russian was difficult, he recalled, because even the Russian children growing up in the city spoke Tajik.[94] Students from these smaller towns and villages arrived in Dushanbe already at some disadvantage. It is possible that the expansion of technical schools and teacher's colleges in smaller cities (Kulob, Kurgan-Tyube) and in the north further entrenched these regional divisions, encouraging aspiring students to stay closer to home.

As the letter above suggests, Bukharan and Samarkandi elites in Tajikistan often felt this division acutely. This was true also for their children. Certainly they were not completely disenfranchised, but they felt as if certain roads were now closed off to them. As Rashid Abdullo, the son of playwright Ghani Abdullo, recalled, his family became "like Jews," in the sense that they had to work twice as hard as others to get ahead and maintain a niche:

> I have a good biography, but my geography is bad. The first ones to really feel this were the Samarkandis, because they became unneeded,

> and they had one path, like the Jews, to be specialists and a step ahead of everyone, [because] only then will you be needed. . . . And in this way they were, as they say, in demand and that's how it was for them with all the local Tajiks. If he knows one language, you need to know two. If he knows two, you have to know four . . . and eventually if you cannot find a place for yourself you go out into the bigger world.

If Bukharan and Samarkandi elites felt the loss of an earlier status, others, for example those from Gharm or Kulob, were frustrated by the lack of opportunity—they found that senior positions in many institutions tended to favor Leninobodis. At the same time, while regionalism caused resentment, its importance should not be overstated. As we will see, political elites from the north fought to pour resources into developing the southern part of the republic, while economists hailing from the Pamirs or from Gharm thought about the prosperity of their republic as a whole.

It was not only regional affiliations that divided the growing professional elite. As elsewhere, Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign was not met with universal acceptance.[95] For those who had suffered under Stalin, or were children of those who did, the changes were welcome, at least in so far as those changes enabled people to return from camps or shed the burden of being children of "enemies of the people." For others, who had made their careers under Stalin and had actively contributed to the creation of cultural life in that period, the changes were harder to swallow.

Arguably, these divisions overlapped with a generational change. Khodizoda had noted that members of the preceding generation sincerely devoted themselves to "service in the building and strengthening of the Soviet state [and] the propaganda and agitation of communist thought," whereas his own had largely grown up in the system and believed in it. Many of the generation that followed—that is, those who came of age during the thaw—would come to question the premises on which people like Khodizoda had built their lives, namely that participating in the Soviet project and developing one's own culture were not just compatible, but necessarily tied together. As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, reckoning with the Stalinist past also meant questioning what the Soviet experiment meant for one's "national" culture and welfare—the ostensible goal to which these young men and women were encouraged to devote themselves.[96]

We can see this generational split in the difference between the poet Mirzo Tursunzoda and those of the thaw generation like Sherali, Sufieva, and Sobir. Tursunzoda was most famous for his poems about India, and was known for his anti-imperialist writings. A key figure in the USSR Union of Writers as well as the Soviet Committee for Solidarity with Countries of Asia and Africa, he

epitomized the idea of Soviet Tajikness. The younger generation started their lives under the tutelage of people like Tursunzoda, and were sometimes known as "Komsomol poets" because of their progression through the institutions described above. They participated in the creation of a unified "Soviet" culture by translating their counterparts from Russia and other republics. Sherali, for example, was known for his translations of the Russian Poet Sergei Yesenin's work. They sometimes wrote on typical Soviet themes—Sherali penned a poem devoted to the Nurek Dam and Sufieva one to Rogun. Yet they also came to lament what they saw as the disappearance of Tajik as a language, the loss of connection to a broader Persian culture, and the dominance of Russian. These views would find particular resonance during the perestroika.

The notion of a generational split needs some qualification. Generational affiliation was not the only determinant of one's point of view, and at least in their early years, many younger writers were championed by their elders.[97] Even among the younger cohort of intellectuals there were differences in where their dissatisfaction with the Soviet system led them. For some, it was expressed in a Tajik nationalism defined first and foremost in anti-Uzbek terms. Others looked beyond Moscow or bypassed it for their own version of internationalism. For many it was expressed in subtler ways, such as the campaigns to bring "Tajik" traditions into public life. An example of this is the campaign to institute the Persian New Year, Nowruz, as a public holiday. In 1966 *Maorif va Madoniyat* (the local version of the educational weekly *Uchitel'skaia Gazeta*) became a focal point of the Nowruz campaign, which finally secured party approval in the early 1970s. From the 1960s, the newspaper gained a reputation for pushing ideological boundaries. The paper was led by Buriniso Berdieva, who took the reins in 1960 after graduating from the party's higher school in 1958. Throughout her tenure, *Maorif va Madoniyat* published writers and views that, while not completely beyond the pale, could not find platforms elsewhere.[98] Arguably the paper was analogous to the Russian "thick journals" that, from the late 1960s on, pushed the boundaries of discourse in more liberal and more nationalist directions.[99]

The generational rift went beyond the cultural sphere. By the 1970s and 1980s, the graduates of the 1950s increasingly took leading positions in the party, managed industry, staffed the research institutes and taught at the. To them, the Soviet Union often seemed a land of opportunity. They tended to assume that building schools and factories would be enough to attract people to the new way of life. They expressed frustration when this turned out not to be the case. Already in 1963 Rasulov complained about young people who were "whiners, complainers; young old men who are disappointed with everything, who are not impressed by anything. They are only interested in the consumerist side of life. They are not interested in what they themselves can do for society: they do not even want to

think it. These people are used to thinking that all the good things in life which they use, which surround them—that's how it should be."[100] For Rasulov, who made his career during the difficult Stalin years, the new generation had it easy yet seemed to expect even more. As we saw earlier, the expansion of education created opportunities, but it also raised expectations while leaving many people behind.

The elite that emerged in the postwar decades fulfilled the general goals of Soviet education policies and the more specific ones of intellectual and political leaders like Ayni and Gafurov. Shaped by their experiences the new educated elite could devote itself to working for the economic and cultural life of their republic even as they sought to continue their own personal growth. They felt a connection to broader developments in the Soviet Union and even the world at large.